

# **INVITATION AND INSTRUCTIONS TO PROPOSERS**

## **CITY OF SOMERVILLE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TRUST FUND TENANCY STABILIZATION PROGRAM**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The City of Somerville Affordable Housing Trust Fund (SAHTF) is soliciting Proposals to operate and administer the Tenancy Stabilization Program in an amount of up to \$50,000, of which up to 15% shall be allocated to administrative fees. The contract term will be from July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015, and the Trust may choose to extend the term up to two additional years.

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to select an agency/entity to administer and operate the Somerville Affordable Housing Trust Fund's Tenancy Stabilization Program. This program provides up to \$3000 in grant funds to eligible applicants who are in need of money for rental arrearages, security deposits, or First and Last Month's Rent, utility arrearages, and moving costs, in order to help stabilize clients' housing situations; plus supportive services and/or on-going counseling to ensure the stabilization of tenancies for those receiving financial assistance.

This document is intended to provide a common and uniform set of instructions to guide Proposers through the proposal process.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Somerville Affordable Housing Trust Fund (SAHTF) was created in 1989, by a city ordinance, and its first programs began in 1991. Its purpose is to preserve and create affordable rental and homeownership units in Somerville and carry out programs to directly assist homeowners and renters.

The Somerville Affordable Housing Trust Fund operated a Renter Revolving Loan Fund from 1992 through 2006. The program was developed to provide stabilization to low-income households who found themselves in rent arrears and at risk of eviction. In 2006, the Somerville Affordable Housing Trust Fund ended the Renter Revolving Loan Fund and replaced it with the Tenancy Stabilization Program and solicited proposals from local agencies to administer the program. Since 2006, the program has been operated by the Somerville Community Corporation. From 2012 to the present, the Somerville Homeless Coalition has been operating the Program. The SAHTF is seeking an agency to administer the Tenancy Stabilization Program, as outlined below.

### **PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

The SAHTF has developed several guidelines for the Tenancy Stabilization Program. Proposers must take into account these requirements when proposing a program. The requirements are as follows:

- 1) Eligible Uses of Funds include rental arrearages, security deposits, or First and Last Month's Rent, utility arrearages, and moving costs. No funds may be used for other purposes.
- 2) Eligible applicants must have incomes less than or equal to 80% of Area Median Income.
- 3) Applicants may receive up to \$3,000 for the above stated uses, but the grant amount shall in no case exceed the amount needed to cover the eligible uses.
- 4) Funds will be distributed to applicants as a grant rather than a loan, but applicants **must** enter into, and comply with, a grant agreement with the agency/entity outlining how the applicants will participate in supportive services or on-going counseling as a condition of receipt of funds.

## SCOPE OF SERVICES

The contracted agency/entity will be responsible for operating the Tenancy Stabilization Program, which includes the following components. Proposers may suggest alternative methodologies if they believe such methodologies would be more appropriate.

1. Conduct Outreach to Potential Eligible Renters.
2. Certify Income Eligibility. Verify that renters have a household income less than or equal to 80% of Area Median Income.
3. Create Supportive Service Agreements with Grantees. The operating agency will be expected to provide supportive services to grantees, and should expect to leverage outside resources or internal capacity to provide these services.
4. Submit Progress Reports. Identify goals and define outcomes on which to report and submit to SAHTF on a quarterly basis.
5. Distribute Funds for Assistance. The contracted agency/entity will be expected to make the initial payment for rental assistance to be reimbursed by the City at a later date. Wherever possible, SAHTF would prefer that the agency/entity make this check directly payable to the landlord.
6. Prepare Requisitions for Funds. The City of Somerville administers the Trust's finances. The contracted agency/entity will submit invoices to SAHTF on a monthly basis for reimbursement of expenses, with documentation of funds expended, such as copies of checks to landlords or rent receipts.

## CONTRACT TERM

This contract will be for the upcoming fiscal year 2015. The original contract dates will be July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015. The Trust may choose to extend the term up to two additional years.

## **PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS**

### **Proposal Format and Deadline**

**One electronic copy must be submitted to SAHTF, c/o Kelly Donato at [kdonato@somervillema.gov](mailto:kdonato@somervillema.gov) by 12:00 Noon on Monday, June 2, 2014.**

## **REQUIRED SUBMISSIONS**

### **A. Contact Information**

Including Agency Name, Principal Contact Name and Position, Phone Number, Fax Number and Email Address.

Please include the name and email address of the person who will be submitting the bi-annual progress reports and the person who will be submitting the invoicing.

### **B. Transmittal Letter**

The Proposal shall include a one-page letter of transmittal signed by the principal(s) of the Proposer and addressed to: Mary Cassesso, SAHTF Chairperson at the above address.

### **C. Methodology**

The Proposal shall include a detailed description of the proposed methodology for conducting the Tenancy Stabilization Program given the Program Requirements and Scope of Services described above and a detailed description of how the Proposer meets the evaluation criteria described below. Please ensure that you include how you intend to:

- 1) Determine Applicant's Income Eligibility
- 2) Determine the Grant Amount for Each Applicant
- 3) Create Supportive Service Agreements with Grantees
- 4) Provide proposed supportive services to Grantees.
- 5) Coordinate with local agencies
- 6) Encourage and Inform Potential Grantees of additional resources and services that they can access, i.e. FEMA, RAFT, mediation services, IDAs, etc. The goal of this is to allow the grant monies to be stretched as far as possible and to ensure stabilization.
- 7) Track Stabilization

### **D. Project Budget**

One Page Project Budget: This should include Trust Fund contribution for assistance as well as leveraged resources for supportive services.

### **E. Composition of Team/Professional Qualifications**

The Proposal must include a) agency/entity's background and mission; b) agency/entity's qualifications for the administration of the program; and c) proposed staffing and qualifications of staff.

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F. References

The Proposal shall include three references attesting to the agency's background and ability to administer a program of this scope. Please include a name and contact phone number for all references.

G. Signature Authority (*New as of 2015*)

- in an effort to expedite the grant process once a grant is awarded, provide either a certificate of vote by a Board for signature authority or complete one of the attached forms (under separate PDF attachment).

## SELECTION PROCESS

The SAHT will review Proposals received at the following Trust Meeting on June 12, 2014.

The SAHTF shall evaluate all Proposals in accordance with the procedure set forth in M.G.L. c. 30B, § 6. The Trust reserves the right to require a personal interview at which all team members should be present.

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

The following criteria will be considered in evaluating Proposals:

- Whether the Proposal includes the following basic elements:
  - Methodology for administering the Tenancy Preservation Program.
  - Explanation of Supportive Services to be provided to Grantees
  - A clear plan for developing a stabilization data collection system.
- Experience
  - Whether the Proposer has successfully administered a similar program.
- Somerville/Non-Profit Preference
  - Whether the proposing agency/entity is a Somerville business
  - Whether the proposing agency/entity is a non-profit
- References
  - Whether the Proposer's references suggest that the Proposer will perform in a timely, competent, and professional manner and can work collaboratively with the SAHTF.

## RESERVATION OF RIGHTS

The SAHTF reserves the right to extend the deadline for submission of Proposals and/or request supplementary information prior to the deadline for submission, to waive minor informalities, and/or to reject all Proposals if in the best interests of the SAHTF.

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT

The selected Proposer will be expected to execute a Professional Services Contract.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information, please contact Kelly Donato at the above address or by telephone at (617) 625-6600, x 2560, by fax at (617) 666-8035 or by e-mail at [kdonato@somervillema.gov](mailto:kdonato@somervillema.gov).